

Indiana House of Representatives

News and Information

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SMITH BILL THAT MANDATES COLLECTION OF STATS ON INMATES PASSED

INDIANAPOLIS -- Legislation authored by State Rep. Vernon G. Smith (D-Gary) that will require state and locally operated community corrections programs to collect and report statistics on those imprisoned passed out of the House Courts and Criminal Code Committee on Wednesday.

House Bill 1813 will require corrections programs to report to the Legislative Services Agency the race, ethnicity, gender and communicable disease carrier status of offenders in the programs.

Smith is chair of the Forensics Study Commission, a group that seeks alternative ways of working with and rehabilitating offenders. The commission needs to maintain its records about the population of those incarcerated in the corrections programs in order to establish whether or not the programs are effective and if they are serving the population that needs to be served.

"We need to use all information available to determine which groups are most commonly incarcerated and which groups have an opportunity to be a part of the community corrections programs," said Smith. "Once we determine this, we can tailor our efforts so that they can be the most effective."

This bill will also make the reintegration of offenders into the community one of the purposes of community corrections programs.

"The inability to find a job or a place to live leads many former offenders to commit a new crime, which takes them back to prison," said Smith. "By having corrections programs focus on helping the offender back into the community, we will be able to cut down drastically on the rate of recidivism."

House Bill 1813 now moves to the full House for further consideration.